Dr. Telman Ibrahimov
Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

CAUCASIAN CARPETS "GOLLU CHICHI", "ZEYKHUR", "TAPANCHA"("PISTOL")

historical and cultural review of the origin, distribution and artistic features
of the design of one Caucasian carpet

The name of the traditional carpet "***Tapancha***", which was woven in Dagestan Tabasaran, means the name of a firearm - a pistol. The design of the carpet is intriguing with its unusual traditional name and ornamental motif, at first glance, very far from resembling a firearm. Nevertheless, the fact remains: the design of this carpet in Dagestan is known precisely under this name "*tapancha*" / "pistol". This name does not have its official confirmation in the Albums of technical drawings of Caucasian carpets, published by the Caucasian Handicraft Committee (1912) and Zakgostorg (1928). Local, Tabasaran name "*tapancha*" arose among local weavers and residents. What is the reason for such an unusual name for the carpet? To answer this question, you will have to make a short excursion into the history and geography of this carpet in the South Caucasus.

It is believed that the birthplace of this carpet is Karabakh, where local weavers called it "*Mashyn*" (machine). The reason for this name was that at the beginning of the 19th century, with the annexation of Karabakh to Russia, European and Russian industrial fabrics with printed ornament began to arrive here (1.145; 9.302-303). Ornamental motives of these industrial fabrics (including women's shawls) with printed

ornaments acquired the name “*mashin nakhysh*” (machine ornaments /mechanical ornaments/printed ornaments) in Karabakh. The design of the future “*tapancha*” carpet was an imitation of those very European printed ornamental motives.

As a result of the migration of this carpet from Karabakh to Shirvan and its spread in local carpets, a new local name appeared - “*Gollu kol*” (flower bush with “supporting hands”). Carpets with this design were also woven in the villages of Kuba such as Pirebedil, Ugah and others.

The further spread of the design to the north is recorded in the Cuban carpets of the Tat village of Chichi, where it acquired two new, local names: «*Gollu chichi*” (Chichi with hands) and “*Ispigul”* (white flower). The second name is due to the fact that the color of the round background of the medallion in Chichi carpets was traditionally the former color (1.145). The name of the Tat village Chichi repeats the name of the nearest river, which is a tributary of the Shabran River.

Subsequently, the design of the carpet continues to spread to the north of the Kuban region and is approved in the Lezghin village of Zeykhur (modern Qusar region of Azerbaijan). Carpets with the same design, woven in this village, became known worldwide as "*Zeykhur*". The name "*Zeykhur*" denotes the name of the village where they traditionally weaved. The name of the carpet "*Zeykhur*", as a sub-area "Lezghi" of the Shirvan group, is mentioned in the review by M. D. Isaev "Carpet production of Transcaucasia" (Tiflis 1932). In the review of Caucasian carpets by Ulrich Schurmann, it is also called “*Zeykhur*”.

The name of the village Zeykhur is formed from two Lezghin words: ***zey***-new + ***khur*** - village (New village). The name is explained by the fact that the village was rebuilt anew in the 19th century after it was completely destroyed by the troops of Nadir Shah in the 18th century.

During the Caucasian War with Russia, the village of Zeykhur is destroyed again by the now Russian troops. At the end of the 20th century, the village was rebuilt in the same place, but it was called in a new way: "*Yukhary Zeykhur*" (Upper Zeykhur ". Some of the villagers who moved to the south and formed the village of *Geda-Zeykhur* (***Geda***-junior + ***zey***-new + ***khur***-village).

At the end of the 19th century, with the creation of the Caucasian Handicraft Committee, the craft of carpet weaving spread in mountain villages on both sides of the Samur River (the border river between Azerbaijan and Dagestan) and reach the Tabasaran region (province), which at one time was part of the Derbent Khanate.

The geographical name of the historical region Tabasaran is much older than the name of Dagestan. Researchers of the ancient history of the South Caucasus identify the name "Tabasaran" with the name of one of the 26 tribes of the ancient state of Caucasian Albania. The name of the tribes - "*tavaspars*", is also present in the work of the Albanian historian of the 10th century Movses Daskhurantsi "History of the country of Alban" (7. 192). Later historians of Caucasian Albania also acknowledge the ancient

Albanian origin of the name Tabasaran. The name has undergone a transformation: *Tavaspar-Tavasparan-Tabasaran*, in which the Persian-language suffix "*an*" forms the plural and indicates the Persian period of the history of this region.

Long before the Persian conquest, as a result of the Arab invasion of the South Caucasus and Dagestan, the territory of Tabasaran became part of the Arab Caliphate, and after its collapse - part of Shirvan (8:56).

Returning to the Tabasaran carpet, we have to state that at the end of the 19th century, the design of the carpet, which came from Karabakh, firmly established itself in the Dagestan province of Tabasaran, where carpet weaving was carried out in such villages of this region as: Khuchni, Arkit, Arak, Tatil, Issyk, Kondik, Chere , Mezhgul, Tinit, Ersi, Khiv, Kandyk, Lakhlya, Turaga, Halaga (3.39-40). In the modern official classification of Dagestan carpets, the "*Tapancha*" carpet is also "fixed" in the group of Tabasaran carpets.

The "*tapancha*" carpet design migrates from the Tabasaran province to the neighboring Kyurin (Lezghin) province of Dagestan. In the village of Mikrakh of this province, the "*tapancha"* carpet acquires another, now the Lezghi name, "*ketzer*" (3.40). The Dagestani author of this information distortedly conveys the local Lezghi name of this carpet. In fact, the carpet was called not "*ketzer*" but "*Ktzar*", which in Lezghi means the name of the city of Qusar (now Qusar is a separate city and administrative region of Azerbaijan, formed as a result of the administrative division of the Azerbaijani province of Kuba in 1930. City and province named after the local river - *Kusar chay*).

Carpets with the Kuban-Lezghin name "Ktzar" came to Dagestan from the carpet market in the city of Ktzar in the Kuban province. These carpets were delivered to the carpet market in the city of Ktzar from the remote village of Zeykhur.

It is appropriate to recall here that in 1846-1860 the entire Kuban Uyezd with the city of Kusar and the village of Zeykhur, the Russian Empire were reassigned to Derbent Province. Thus, the Zeykhur carpets arriving in Dagestan from Kusar/Ktzar acquired a new name there - "Ktzar/Kusar", which indicated the place where the design of this carpet came from and came.

The emergence and movement of carpet design from Karabakh to Shirvan, from there to Kuba and finally to the Dagestan province of Tabasaran, where it acquired the local name "*tapancha*" - is explained by the fact that the Caucasian Handicraft Committee was involved in the development of carpet craft in the South Caucasus. The central office of the Handicraft Committee was located in the then capital of the Caucasus - Tbilisi. From Tbilisi came the management of the carpet craft network throughout the South Caucasus and the distribution of approved technical carpet designs.

The dissemination of technical drawings proceeded according to the principle "from the center to the outskirts". Mountainous Dagestan and Tabasaran for Tbilisi were the distant outskirts of the Caucasus. To provide technical carpet designs, Derbent

and Tabasaran carpet manufactory's were subordinated to the Kuban branch of the Crafts Committee, which served as a regional center for the distribution of carpet designs.

The distribution of the approved designs of Caucasian carpets went from west to east (in the direction from the Lesser Caucasus to the Bolshoi) and from the pre-mountain regions of the South Caucasus to the mountainous ones. This character of the commonality of Caucasian carpet traditions is also confirmed by Dagestan researchers of local carpets. Debirov P.M., analyzing the ornamental carpet motifs of Azerbaijan and Dagestan, notes that "the artistic system of the ornamental school of Derbent has a connection with the traditional forms characteristic of Muslim art in general and modern Azerbaijan in particular" (4. 66).

Another Dagestan researcher S.M. Garunova speaks about the unity of the Derbent and Tabasaran schools of carpet weaving: "The division of carpets into Derbent and Tabasaran is, in our opinion, very conditional. The fact is that about a third of the population of Tabasaran were (and still are) Azerbaijanis, and we did not record any significant difference in the types of carpets they produced either in literature or during field work in 2015 "(3.41-42).

Another Dagestan researcher, Ramazanova Z.B., speaks about the reason for the unity of the traditions of the Azerbaijani and Dagestan carpet craft, which states: "Turning to the characteristics of the centers of carpet weaving in Dagestan, the city of Derbent with the neighboring Tat's and Azerbaijani's villages should be noted: Mitagi, Gimeidi, Mugatyr , Jaba, Maragha, Ersi, Darvakh, Sabnava ... "(2. 98).

In the XIX - early XX century. Cuban and Tabasaran weavers produced carpets based on the demand of the Derbent market. From there, these carpets under the general name "Derbent" were exported to the markets of the South and North Caucasus, Russia and Europe (3.42).

The famous design of the "Zeykhur"/"*Tapancha*" carpet, genetically derived from the design of industrial printed European and Russian fabrics, in the late 19th - early 20th centuries, has become an authentic symbol of the local carpet culture for such regions of the South Caucasus as Cuba, Kusar, Derbent and Tabasaran ... Residents of these regions of the once united, and later - divided by political and administrative borders of the South Caucasus, rightfully consider themselves the legitimate heirs of the traditions of this carpet. In the process of historical development and intra-Caucasian trade and cultural migrations, the "Zeykhur"/"*Tapancha*" carpet has become an important cultural phenomenon of many peoples of the South Caucasus.

After a short historical, geographical and cultural excursion, let us return to the answer to the question posed at the beginning of the article: What is the reason for such an unusual Tabasaran name for this famous carpet and what is the connection between its main motive and such an unusual, "militarized" name of the carpet?

The designation of the main motive of the carpet as “St. Andrew’s cross” should be immediately discarded. Such an absurdity can sometimes be heard even among authoritative Western experts on carpets (10). As we have already said, the carpet motif goes back to the printed ornaments of European (French) and Russian fabrics, women's shawls, imported to the Caucasian market since the beginning of the 19th century.

The Kuban names of the carpet - "*Gollu chichi*" and "*Zeykhur*" come from the names of the villages in which they were traditionally woven (Chichi and Zeykhur villages). As for the Tabasaran name "*Tapancha*" ("Pistol"), the situation here is somewhat different. To understand the reason for this name, one should recall the attitude of the Dagestan highlanders to military weapons, as well as the form of the Caucasian flint pistols of the 19th century and the clothes of a Caucasian warrior with gazyrs (Circassian military clothes).

Of course, there is no explicit image of weapons and military ammunition in the carpet. But the four so-called "sleeves" extending from the central medallion, in the oldest Tabasaran carpets, resemble the shape of Caucasian flint pistols. Some old weavers talk about their resemblance to the crossed handles of Caucasian daggers. There is a version that 4 oblong "sleeves" adjoining the central medallion symbolize pistol cartridges and ready-made powder charges - "gazyrs" that are on the clothes of a Caucasian warrior.

Of course, the connection between the ornamental motif with a pistol and cartridges is rather arbitrary. But the fact remains that among the Tabasaran men and weavers the name “*Tapancha*”(“Pistol”) was stuck behind this carpet. It is known that this carpet was considered a “male” symbol. It was customary to give a carpet as a talisman. In some villages of Tabasaran, this carpet was considered sacred and it was impossible to walk on it. In some cases, this carpet has been a source of superstitious fear.

After the Second World War, the number of “*Tapancha*” carpets weaved in Tabasaran dropped dramatically. Local weavers became convinced that the pistol carpet is a symbol of war, blood and death. To weave such a carpet means to attract a terrible disaster on yourself and your family. Few of today's weavers dare to weave this forbidden rug. This is how the Dagestani historian and ethnographer Abumuslim Gadzhiagaev comments on the mystical fear and symbolism of the motives of this old carpet (11.).

Summing up a brief excursion into the history of the emergence and distribution of the famous design "*Gollu Chichi*" / "*Zeykhur*" / "*Tapancha*" in the Caucasian carpets of Shirvan, Cuba, Qusar, Derbent and Tabasaran, it should be recognized that this carpet has become a common property of Azerbaijanis, tats, tabasaranov and lezghins. All of them claim the authorship of this carpet with equal success and consider it an important marker of their cultural identity.

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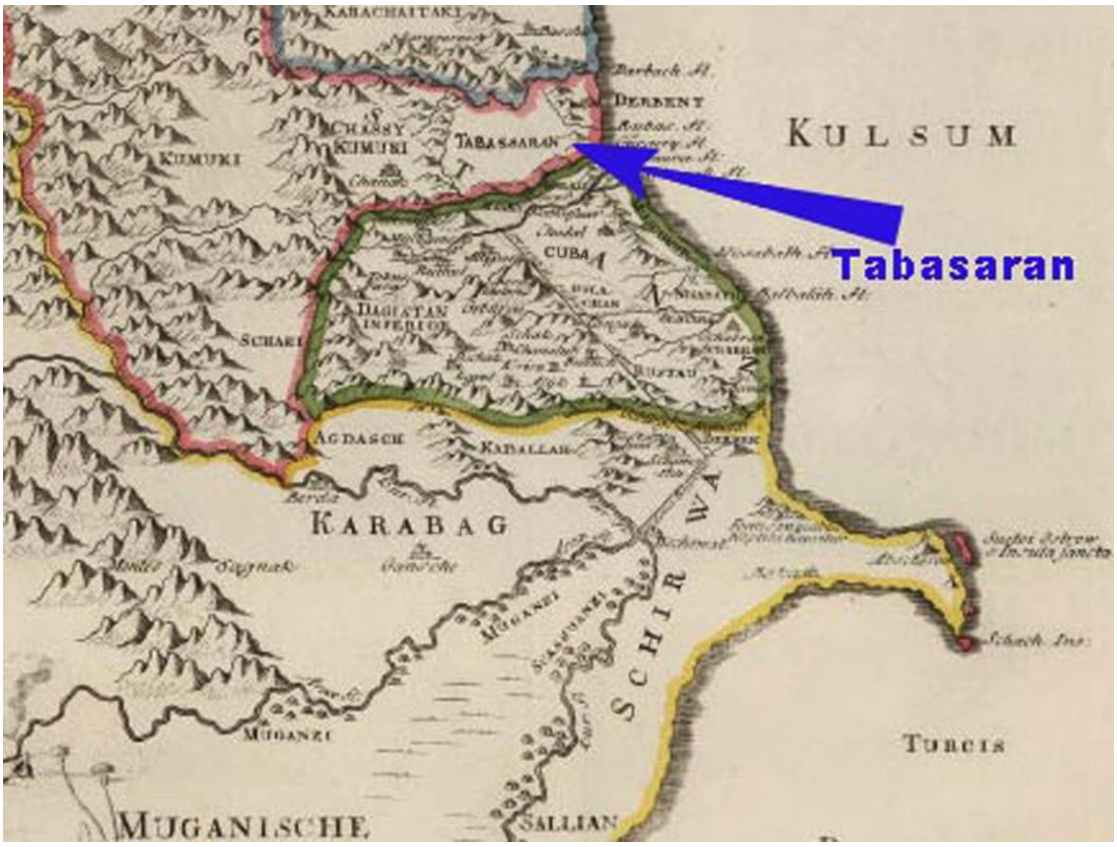
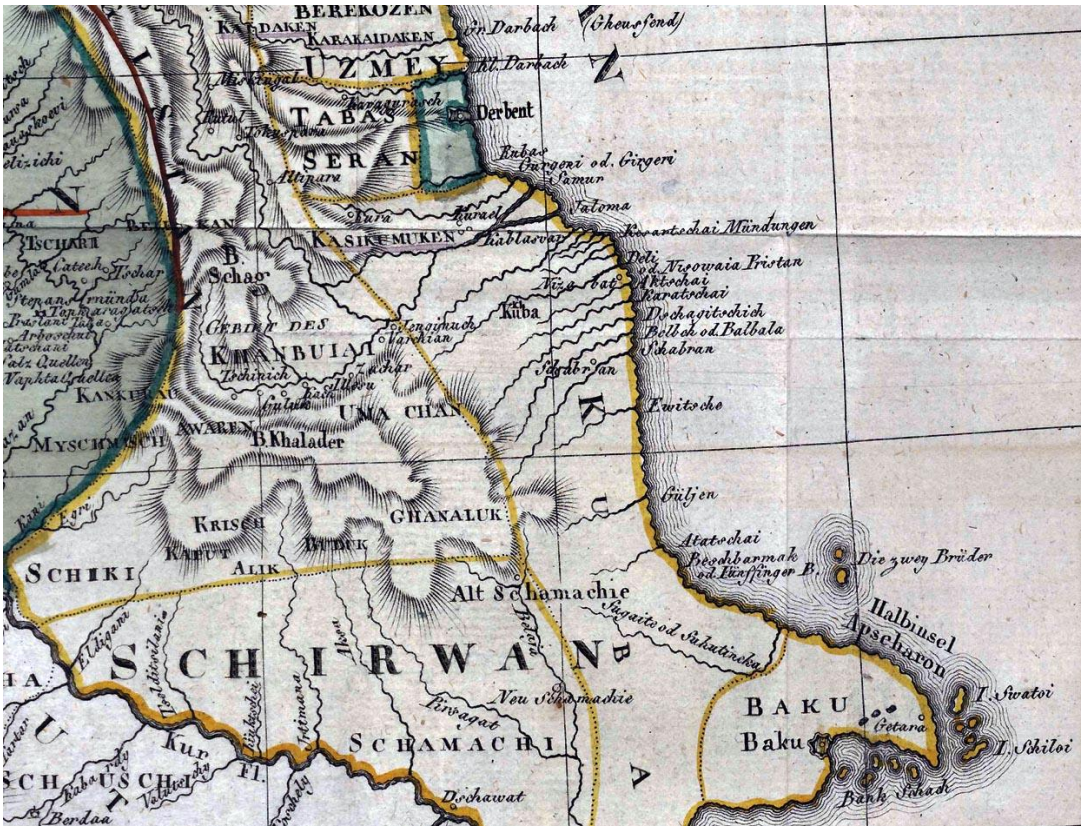
ILLUSTRATIONS



Shirvan and Dagestan (Tabasaran) in 1728. The map was compiled by the Russian geographer Gerber Ioan Gustav



Shirvan and Dagestan (Tabasaran). Die Volker Des Caucasus: Nach Den Berichten Der Reisebeschreiber (1808) (German Edition)

European and Russian women's shawls with printed decor

St. Andrew cross

Kuba. Chichi Village

Kuba. Chichi Village

Kuba/Kusar. Zeykhur Village

Kuba/Kusar. Zeykhur Village

Kuba. Chichi Village

Kuba/Kusar. Zeykhur Village

Kuba/Kusar. Zeykhur Village

Dagestan. Tabasaran. Arkit Village

Caucasian Pistol

Weapons on the carpet are a symbol of masculinity, security and wealth

Caucasian daggers and pistols. The symbolism of the carpet "*Tapancha*"/"*Pistol*"

Containers with gunpowder charges (gazyr's) for silicon firearms

Clothes and military accessories of the Caucasian warrior

Kuba. Ugah Village. Early XXth century
Azerbaijan National carpet Museum

Kuba. Pirabadil Village. Early XXth century
Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum